

REMARKS

Claims 1-3 remain in the application. Claim 1 has been amended.

Claims 1-3 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Stout (U.S. Patent no. 3,395,553). The Examiner contends that Stout discloses a flexible coupling with an input member (10), an output member (14), first and second integrally formed hubs, a flexible element (30) allowing axial misalignment, a one-way clutch (26), and a coil spring with a square cross section (24).

In response, Applicant has amended independent claim 1 to set forth a flexible coupling assembly (10) for interconnecting an output shaft (12) and an input shaft (14), said flexible coupling assembly comprising: a first hub (20) configured to mount to the input shaft for rotation therewith; a second hub (40) configured to mount to the output shaft for rotation therewith; a first flexible element (50) interconnecting said first and second hubs for transferring rotational torque between said first and second hubs while continuously compensating for axial misalignment between said first and second hubs, said flexible element having a first end (52) fixedly secured to said first hub, a second end (54) fixedly secured to said second hub, and a plurality of helical coils extending between said first and second ends for transferring said rotational torque therebetween; and a one-way clutch (60) operatively coupled between said first hub and said input shaft for transferring torque in a first rotational direction from said first hub to said input shaft while allowing the output shaft to rotate relative to the input shaft in an opposite second

rotational direction, said one-way clutch comprising a third hub (70) adapted to be fixedly secured to said input shaft and a second flexible element (90) coupled between said first hub and said third hub, said second flexible element having a first end (92) fixedly secured to said third hub, a second free end (94), and a plurality of helical coils (96) extending therebetween and in frictional engagement with said first hub for selectively coupling said first and third hub to transfer torque in said first rotational direction.

Stout does not disclose a third hub adapted to be fixedly secured to the input shaft nor a second flexible element coupled between the first hub and third hub. Rather, Stout only discloses and teaches first and second hubs and a first flexible element coupled therebetween and frictionally engaged with one of the hubs to function as a clutch coupling rotation between the first and second hub. In contrast, Applicants invention includes first and second hubs (20, 40) continuously coupled by the first flexible element (50) and a third hub (70) selectively coupled to the first hub (20) by a second flexible element (90). In this arrangement, the first flexible element (50) interconnects the first and second hubs (20, 40) while also continuously compensating for axial misalignment therebetween and the second flexible element (90) selectively couples the first hub (20) and third hub (70) to transfer the rotational torque from the second hub (40) through the first hub (20) and to the third hub (70).

Finally, the additional references noted by the Examiner also all fail to disclose, teach or suggest the combination of first and second hubs (20, 40) continuously coupled by the first

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flexible element (50) and a third hub (70) selectively coupled to the first hub (20) by a second flexible element (90).

Therefore, amended independent claim 1 is clearly patentable over the cited prior art and the rejection should be withdrawn.

It is respectfully submitted that this patent application is in condition for allowance, which allowance is respectfully solicited. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this election or patent application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any underpayment or credit any overpayment of the above fees associated with this Communication to Deposit Account No. 50-1759. A duplicate copy of this form is attached.

Respectfully submitted,



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